

# Roundtable Review

## Message from our CEO

Greetings,



My favorite time of year—the time to reflect on thankfulness and giving. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in your respective places. If you are reading this article, you are likely serving people in some capacity. Sometimes it seems it is a thankless job. Nevertheless, you may be a parent or relative supporting family members, serve in a non-profit and/or the faith community to support our citizens, work as a health professional for the Department of Health or healthcare industry, report each day as a public servant or an educator and support staff in our schools, or fill in your position and know that YOU are impacting and shaping lives. I am grateful to serve with so many of you who are serious about helping and supporting others. It is not unusual for me to work alongside people in our community who see their work as a ministry, or a “labor of love” and not a “job”, one that makes a difference in the lives of citizens of all the stages of life. As I reflect on the season of giving, this is a great time to examine ourselves and determine if we are giving enough to our families, through serving in our organizations and businesses, or through our collaborative efforts that are truly impactful and make a tangible difference. There are so many people in need, not only those who we serve but those of us who are serving. This is the time of year when many of us are reflecting on our own loved ones while serving others with the same experiences, including residents who face homelessness or will go through the holidays with no gifts to receive or give, and are left feeling hopeless. As we serve and celebrate our lives and the lives of others we experience, be cognizant of the great need around us. Let us demonstrate our gratefulness for whatever we have by giving and supporting others more than ever in our community now, and in the coming year. Let’s continue to make a difference because we are – better together. Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season to all.

*Teresa Bishop*  
Chief Executive Officer



2024

NEW YEAR  
CELEBRATION

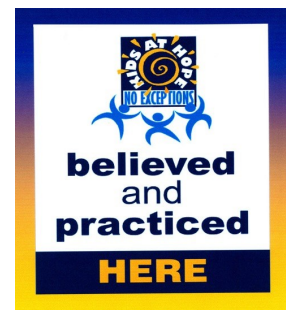
### Inside this issue:

Kids at Hope .....	2
Drug Free St. Lucie .....	3-5
Board Members .....	5
About Us.....	6

### Special Dates:

- World AIDS Day 12/1
- Special Education Day 12/2
- National Cookie Day 12/4
- Hanukkah 12/7-15
- Human Rights Day 12/10
- Crossword Puzzle Day 12/21
- Christmas 12/25
- National Thank You Note Day 12/26
- Kwanzaa 12/26-1/1
- New Year’s Eve 12/31
- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- International AIDS Awareness Month

# Kids at Hope in St. Lucie County



The members of the Roundtable saw the importance of changing the mindset of children being labeled as “at risk”, to seeing all children as hopeful and capable of success. Since 2007, the practices and beliefs of Kids at Hope have been taught and implemented in St. Lucie County. The mission continues today with training opportunities for schools, both public and private, after-school programs, and more.

The Kids at Hope team recently trained the Lindsay School of Arts staff. The staff members were introduced to what it means to be an “Ace”, a caring adult, in a child’s life. The training challenged the staff to shift their thinking from focusing on the child’s risk factors to focusing on the opportunities to show hope to a child.

During the training sessions, the staff participated in role plays, small group discussions, and individual work. The staff received information about the history of Kids at Hope, the three Universal Truths, Four Destinations of Travel, and the Kids at Hope “Aces”. Implementation of Kids at Hope helps to enhance their mission to provide high-quality arts education programming to children of all ages, all backgrounds, and all financial situations for free forever.

Upon completion of the training, the staff members became “Treasure Hunters”. They are now committed to searching for the talents, skills, and intelligence that exist in all the students they work with daily. The staff now have a new understanding of the power of words and how to use the language of hope to build lasting and meaningful relationships with their students.

Kids at Hope is also partnering with the 21st Century Programs at Westwood Academy and Treasure Coast High School to work with their students in these after-school programs. Students will be encouraged to identify the “Aces” in their lives and the important roles that these caring adults. More than 120 students will be reached through this partnership.

Kids at Hope is not just for the instructional staff at our schools, but for everyone who has a role in the life of a child. Parents at Westwood Academy received an overview of the Kids at Hope culture and how it can help to build stronger bonds with their children.

Kids at Hope is alive and well in St. Lucie County. If you have not been trained in the practices and beliefs, please contact the Kid at Hope team. **St. Lucie County believes all children are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS!**



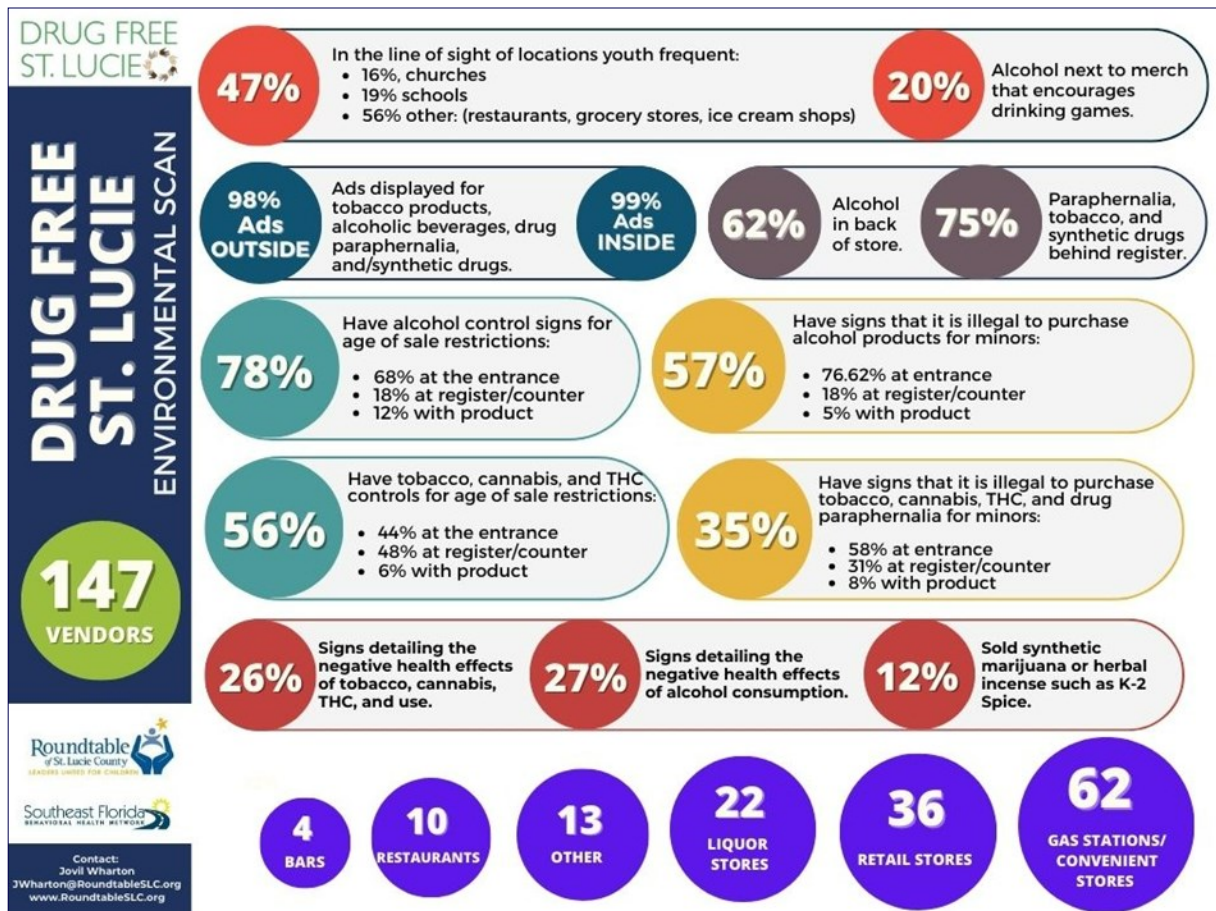
# Environmental Scanning: A Public Health Tool for Identifying Community Risk Factors

## Environmental Scanning: A Public Health Tool for Identifying Community Risks Factors that Contribute to Underage Drinking and Other Substance Use.

This past summer (June-August 2023), Drug Free St. Lucie, with the support of volunteers from New Horizons Prevention Specialists, conducted one hundred and forty-seven (147) environmental scans in St. Lucie County to document youth exposure to alcohol, CBD, vaping, and Kratom. The environmental scans were conducted at gas stations/convenience stores, liquor stores, retail stores, bars, and restaurants with the following key components being addressed:

- Products and Product Placement
- Promotions/ Advertisement
- Price
- Atmosphere
- Warning Signs

**Summary of Results:** Drug Free St. Lucie will utilize these observations with other assessment data, such as youth survey data, in order to help identify strategies to reduce underage drinking and other substance use.



## Online Dispensaries: Minors' Ease of Access to Marijuana

A recently published study in the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics has shed light on the concerning ease with which minors can purchase marijuana through online dispensaries.



### **Lenient Age Verification:**

The study's findings are alarming, with 18.8 percent of the online dispensaries failing to require any formal age verification throughout the purchasing process<sup>1</sup>. This means that nearly one in five of these establishments permit minors to buy marijuana without any significant age-check measures.

### **Concealment of Payment:**

More than 80 percent of these online dispensaries accepted "nontraceable" payment methods such as prepaid cards or cash, making it easy for young individuals to hide their transactions<sup>1</sup>. Notably, five percent of these online dispensaries provided student discounts, potentially further incentivizing young individuals to engage in marijuana purchases.

### **Cross-State Delivery:**

Furthermore, almost one-third of the dispensaries studied allowed delivery across state lines<sup>1</sup>. An astounding 95 percent of them offered delivery to states with varying marijuana laws compared to the originating state of the online dispensary<sup>1</sup>. Such practices can lead to regulatory inconsistencies and challenges in monitoring the sale of marijuana to minors.

### **Public Health Concerns:**

Health officials have expressed significant concerns regarding the impact of marijuana use on the developing brains of minors, particularly in an era of increased drug potency and widespread legalization. A 2022 survey funded by the National Institute of Health indicated about one-third of 12th graders had used marijuana at least once in 2021, along with 20 percent of 10th graders and 8.3 percent of 8th graders<sup>1</sup>. This study also found a concerning percentage of youth engaging in problematic marijuana use with 6.3 percent of 12th graders, 2.1 percent of 10th graders, and 0.7 percent of 8th graders reporting daily marijuana use in 2021<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Call for Action:**

Parents and professionals who work with youth must remain vigilant about the widespread availability of online dispensaries and the potential diversion of marijuana to minors. There is equally a great need for robust surveillance of online marijuana dispensaries to safeguard the well-being of minors, including implementing strict age verification procedures before allowing cannabis purchases online. In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the pressing need for measures that address the significant vulnerabilities in the online marijuana retail industry, especially concerning minors. by [Drug Free America Foundation](https://www.dfaf.org) (dfaf.org)

### **References:**

Terala, A., Sanguolo, K., Milanaik R. (2023) Access to Marijuana by Minors Via Online Dispensaries. JAMA Pediatrics. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3656

# December is Impaired Driving Prevention Month

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is teaming up with the law enforcement community nationwide during the 2023 winter holiday season Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over high-visibility enforcement campaign, which runs from December 15, 2023, through January 1, 2024. For more information about the **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over** campaign, visit: [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/drunk-driving/drive-sober-or-get-pulled-over/holiday-season](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/drunk-driving/drive-sober-or-get-pulled-over/holiday-season).



**Let’s Keep Our Kids Safe this National Impaired Driving Prevention Month - Impaired driving is entirely preventable.**

Know the facts, and talk with your kids about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs:

- About one in four teen car crashes involves an underage drinking driver.
- Every day about 800 people are injured in a drunk-driving crash.
- Every day in America, another 29 people die as a result of drunk-driving crashes. That’s one person every 50 minutes.
- Marijuana use is increasing, and 13 percent of weekend nighttime drivers have marijuana in their system.
- Marijuana users were about 25 percent more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers with no evidence of marijuana use.

***Start these important conversations with your kids today to make a difference in preventing impaired driving and ensuring safer roads for everyone.***

## Our Funders:



## Our Board Members

- ◆ Terissa Aronson, St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Tom Bakkedahl, 19th Judicial Circuit—State Attorney
- ◆ Rosetta Bartell, Housing Authority of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Linda Bartz, Board of County Commissioners
- ◆ Brian Bauer, CareerSource Research Coast
- ◆ Ann Berner, SE FL Behavioral Health Network
- ◆ Richard Del Toro, Jr., Port St. Lucie Police Department
- ◆ Sean Boyle, Children’s Services Council
- ◆ Joseph Cracchiola, Department of Corrections
- ◆ Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids
- ◆ Thomas Epsky, United Way of St. Lucie & Okeechobee
- ◆ Sonya Gabriel, Steering Committee Chair
- ◆ Arnold Gaines, City of Fort Pierce
- ◆ Diane Holey-Burney, Fort Pierce Police Department
- ◆ Michael Linn, 19th Judicial Circuit-Judge
- ◆ Diamond R. Litty, 19th Judicial Circuit—Public Defender
- ◆ Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
- ◆ Robert McPartlan, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Troy Norman, St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Office
- ◆ Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem
- ◆ Nathan Peterson, Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ David Pickett, City of Port St. Lucie
- ◆ Dr. Jonathan Prince, St. Lucie Public Schools
- ◆ Jeff Lee, St. Lucie County Fire District
- ◆ Clint Sperber, FL Health Department - St. Lucie County
- ◆ Peter Tesch, Economic Development Council
- ◆ Dana Trabulsy, State Representative
- ◆ Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College
- ◆ Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County

**Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.**

**Our Mission:**

To sustain a team of county and business leaders who mobilize resources to improve the education, health, safety, nutrition and care of all children in St. Lucie County.

**Our Vision:**

We envision a community where county leaders, businesses and residents are united to provide all children of St. Lucie County the resources they need to thrive, be successful and achieve their full potential.

## 2023-24 Executive Committee

**CHAIR**

Tony Loupe, Early Learning Coalition

**VICE-CHAIR**

Heather Parker, Guardian ad Litem

**SECRETARY**

Bob McPartlan, Department of Children and Families

**TREASURER**

Ann Berner, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network

**PAST CHAIR**

Lisa von Seelen, Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

Sonya Gabriel, Florida Health Department - St. Lucie

**AT LARGE**

Carol Deloach, Communities Connected for Kids

[www.RoundtableSLC.org](http://www.RoundtableSLC.org)

### **Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.**

546 NW University Blvd., Suite 204  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34986  
Phone: 772-871-5880  
Follow us on Facebook @RoundtableSLC

For questions or to subscribe to our Newsletter:  
DEspinosa@RoundtableSLC.org



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:**

**Teresa Bishop, Chief Executive Officer**

TBishop@RoundtableSLC.org

**Dana Espinosa, Operations Manager**

DEspinosa@RoundtableSLC.org

### **OUR INITIATIVES:**

**Kids at Hope & Youth Leadership St. Lucie**

- ◆ **Kevin Singletary, Project Coordinator**

KSingletary@RoundtableSLC.org

- ◆ **Amanda DeMan, School & Community Liaison**

ADeMan@RoundtableSLC.org

**Drug Free St. Lucie**

- ◆ **C. Jovil Wharton, Project Coordinator**

JWharton@RoundtableSLC.org

**St. Lucie RISE—Mental Health Collaborative**

- ◆ **Shamra Gilles, Mental Health Collaborative Coordinator**

SGilles@RoundtableSLC.org

